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Tuesday, 31 May 2011, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Araud	(France)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Dunlop
	China	Mr. Yang Tao
	Colombia	Mr. Alzate
	Gabon	Mr. Messone
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2011/314*)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2011 314*)

The President (*spoke in French*): Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I should like to invite the representative of the Sudan to participate in this meeting.

Under rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Alain le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, to participate in this meeting. In accordance with the same rule, I invite Mr. Haile Menkerios, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Sudan, to participate in this meeting. Also in accordance with that same rule, I invite Mr. Ezekiel Lol Gatkuoth to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I would like to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/314*, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan.

I now give the floor to Mr. Le Roy.

Mr. Le Roy (*spoke in French*): The interim period covered by the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) will come to a close, as we all know, on 9 July 2011. Much has been accomplished since the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan signed the CPA on 9 January 2005, including the holding of national elections and the referendum on South Sudan's self-determination. Moreover, the security mechanisms agreed to by the parties under the CPA and implemented with the assistance of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) allowed them to deal with many security concerns in a peaceful manner, thereby avoiding, in very many instances, resort to armed hostilities during this interim period.

However, while much has been achieved, a number of key CPA issues remain outstanding, as we all know. These include in particular the status of Abyei, the conclusion of the popular consultations in the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States and the demarcation of the border. An agreement on issues linked to the period following the succession of South Sudan, including wealth-sharing and citizenship, is yet to be achieved. The parties are negotiating the remaining CPA issues as a comprehensive package. Of all these issues, the questions of Abyei and sharing of oil resources are of course the two most critical political and economic issues.

(*spoke in English*)

In a positive development, on 30 May the parties signed a joint position paper on border security that they had finalized on 4 April. The parties agreed on the establishment of a common border zone and the architecture required to jointly manage this zone. However, an agreement on a third-party mechanism to assist the parties in implementing the agreement remains outstanding.

In this context, and as members of the Council are aware, the security situation in Abyei has been a concern for some months. Following clashes in early January 2011, the parties signed the Kadugli agreements on 13 and 17 January. These agreements included provisions to address security and migration concerns. On 4 March, the parties further agreed to withdraw all armed elements from the Abyei area except the Joint Integrated Units and the Joint Integrated Police Units.

While containing the security situation over some months, the Government of the Sudan did not withdraw its oil police, the Popular Defence Forces (PDF) and Misseriya militias. For its part, the Government of Southern Sudan did not withdraw the police elements unilaterally deployed from Juba since August 2010 and those locally recruited in the Abyei area.

In the meantime, UNMIS observed a build-up of armed elements from both sides. Since 3 May, Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Misseriya militia have blocked key roads linking the North and South Sudan, inflicting hardship on the civilian population along the southern side of the border. A number of incidents were also reported, including a Southern Sudan Police Service (SSPS) attack on an SAF Joint Integrated Unit convoy on 1 May at Todach, killing 11 SAF soldiers. On 10 May armed Misseriya attacked an UNMIS patrol near Diffra, injuring four peacekeepers. On 19 May, a SAF convoy, escorted by UNMIS, was attacked in an area controlled by the SSPS.

As the Council is aware, the SAF launched an offensive and captured Abyei town on 21 May. By 22 May, the SAF had taken control of the area up to the Kiir/Bahr el-Arab River. The civilian population of Abyei town fled the area before the attack. It is estimated that more than 40,000 people were displaced by the fighting in and around Abyei town. On 21 May, President Al-Bashir issued two decrees disbanding the Abyei area institutions and relieving its officials from their positions.

The attack on Abyei was accompanied by large-scale looting and burning of property, including the World Food Programme warehouse in Abyei, by Misseriya and PDF elements. While the SAF in Abyei assured UNMIS that it would take measures to prevent such incidents, intermittent looting and arson continue despite increased patrolling by UNMIS in the area.

Humanitarian organizations are addressing the needs of displaced persons. Food and emergency items are being distributed, and medical and nutritional screening is taking place in 11 health posts and 7 nutrition centres in Warrab State. Recent assessments indicate that the most urgent needs are food, water, shelter and non-food items. The World Food Programme is currently feeding 35,000 internally displaced persons, and humanitarian organizations have reported a return movement into the affected area.

The Government of the Sudan has indicated its willingness to withdraw its troops from the Abyei area only when new security arrangements are agreed by both parties and are in place.

As Council members are aware, on 23 May the Joint Defence Board informed the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of its decision that the mandate of the Joint Integrated Units in the Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile States should be disbanded and requested SPLA cooperation in withdrawing and redeploying SPLA forces in these areas south of the 1-1-56 border by 1 June. There are approximately 40,000 SPLA troops emanating from Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile.

On 26 May, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement informed UNMIS that the security situation in the Blue Nile State had become increasingly tense following events in Abyei. UNMIS has received reports that both SAF and SPLA are building up troops in Southern Kordofan. We will continue to monitor these areas closely and keep the Council informed of any developments.

As the Secretary-General stressed in his report of 17 May (S/2011/314*), which is currently under consideration by the Council, the overarching condition for peace and stability in Sudan and the region remains the establishment of good-neighbourly relations between the North and South. There is an urgent need for the parties to address the outstanding CPA and post-secession issues as soon as possible. As noted by the Secretary-General, in the absence of an agreement, the only forums available to the parties to resolve security issues are the mechanisms established under the CPA and supported by UNMIS.

It was in this context that the Secretary-General had urged the parties and the Security Council to consider a technical rollover of UNMIS that would have provided a transition period until the parties were able to reach a settlement on these issues and set up the requisite implementation mechanisms. While the Government of Southern Sudan has expressed its willingness to discuss a technical rollover of UNMIS, in a meeting with the Secretary-General this morning, the Permanent Representative of the Government of the Sudan handed to the Secretary-General a letter from his Foreign Minister indicating the Government's appreciation for the work of UNMIS and its decision that with the end of the interim period, the Government of the Sudan had decided that the Mission's mandate should not be continued beyond 9 July 2011.

In light of the Government of the Sudan's decision not to consent to a technical rollover of UNMIS, the United Nations stands ready to deploy a mission in South Sudan as outlined in the Secretary-General's report. In the meantime, it is imperative that both parties respect the terms of the Kadugli agreements, refrain from taking offensive military action, and work in an open and flexible manner with the African Union High-Level Panel towards finding a lasting solution for Abyei and all other pending issues. The United Nations stands ready, as always, to assist them to do so.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Le Roy for his statement.

I now give the floor to Mr. Menkerios.

Mr. Menkerios: As highlighted by Under-Secretary-General Le Roy, the prospects for peace

consolidation between northern Sudan and southern Sudan, soon to be two separate countries, will remain contingent upon the quality of relationship they establish between them, and such a relationship will largely be shaped by the agreements they reach on residual Comprehensive Peace Agreement issues and post-referendum arrangements.

I therefore cannot stress enough the critical nature of the ongoing negotiations on these issues and the responsibility that rests on the leaders of the two sides to reach agreements that will provide the foundation for peace and security in the Sudan, South Sudan and the region as a whole. It is essential that the leaders of both sides demonstrate the political will necessary to find solutions to these issues and agree on mechanisms for their implementation, with particular focus on a border management mechanism and on a lasting solution for Abyei. There is no time to lose.

So far, although some progress has been made in the negotiations regarding some of these issues, lingering disagreements on others — and in fact the worsening of the situation in Abyei, for instance — threaten a further deterioration of relations that could hamper the establishment of two viable States at peace within and between them. That would also negatively affect the entire region, thus constituting a continuing threat to international peace and security which the international community has invested so much so far to avoid.

I would like to express here, however, that with the concerted efforts of the international community and the countries of the region to urge, encourage and assist the two parties to do what is right for their future, it will be possible for them to avoid an acrimonious divorce with lasting consequences.

As Mr. Le Roy's statement fully covered the realities as they are, I do not have much to add here, but I stand ready to answer any questions in this regard, here or in the closed consultations of the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Menkerios for his statement.

I give the floor to the representative of the Sudan.

Mr. Osman (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to congratulate you, Sir, on your last day as President of the Security Council and to thank you for having convened this important meeting. We also congratulate your country, France, on its judicious management of the Council's work this month.

This meeting is being held following the return of the Security Council mission to several countries of Africa, including my own, the Sudan, as we approach the end of the transitional period on 9 July, representing the final chapter of the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). Just as that historic Agreement has been extremely important to the Government of the Sudan, so has been our bearing of the responsibility to implement it as a strategic objective. In practical terms, we have proven to be the wiser and more restrained party to the Agreement, in spite of the excesses of our partner and all the obstacles to the CPA's implementation. Our commendable record of acceptance of various proposals and suggestions is ample testimony to that effect. Thanks to all these efforts, we are now on the threshold of the end of the transitional period, although several issues remain pending that we had hoped to settle definitively had our partner embraced a spirit of commitment commensurate with ours.

As we discuss the report of the Secretary-General (S/2011/314*) — which, inter alia, recommends the establishment of a United Nations mission in South Sudan following the drawdown of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS) — we must take into account the main point of reference represented by the establishment of that mission. In that regard, we recall the letter we sent to the President of the Security Council on 25 May 2004 (S/2004/425), in the light of which the Security Council adopted presidential statement S/PRST/2004/18 and resolution 1547 (2004), mandating a political mission to assess the anticipated role of the United Nations at that time in monitoring the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement.

With respect to resolution 1590 (2005), mandating the establishment of UNMIS following the signing of the CPA under Article VI of the Charter, we reiterate our gratitude to the United Nations and its vital role in the implementation of the CPA and in assisting the two parties to the Agreement over the past five years. We also appreciate the important role it has played in monitoring various aspects of the CPA.

As we have repeatedly stressed, 9 July is a landmark date that must be respected. We reiterate here that the end of the transitional period on that day, in accordance with the CPA and including the drawdown

of UNMIS in northern Sudan, is of great importance to us, pursuant as it is not only to the CPA but also to the Constitution of the Sudan and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, starting with resolution 1590 (2005) and ending with resolution 1978 (2011) extending the UNMIS mandate until the end of the transitional period on 9 July.

The Government of the Sudan has addressed a letter to the Secretary-General to that effect, in light of the contents of paragraph 80 of his report, in which he urges the two parties to consider a three-month technical rollover of the Mission. In the letter, the Government of the Sudan stresses the importance of ending the Mission on 9 July, in accordance with the relevant resolutions.

Any attempt to use pending issues to justify the continuation of the Mission is indefensible. The so-called pending issues will be settled at the negotiating table in the course of serious negotiations between the two parties. There have been efforts at mediation, such as those of President Mbeki, who is working strenuously to assist the two parties in settling pending issues. Council members will recall our numerous appeals to the international community, and the Security Council in particular, to assist the two parties to settle the pending issues, including the matter of Abyei. In our statements, we have spoken repeatedly and at length on this matter, to the extent that some have found us to be unnecessarily repetitive.

Current developments in Abyei have made clear to all the need for the assistance we have sought. Those developments are not surprising, given the earlier violations by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in March, when it killed many Sudanese Armed Forces soldiers. At that time, we exercised wisdom and restraint, making possible the two Kadugli agreements of 13 and 17 January, which stipulate the withdrawal of all forces from the Abyei area, to be replaced by joint forces of the two parties. However, the other party did not commit to those agreements and left its forces in the area, including 20 soldiers masquerading as police officers.

Provocative attacks by such groups followed, including the kidnapping of six members of the Sudanese Armed Forces. In that instance, too, we showed wisdom and restraint. The abducted six had been deployed as members of joint integrated units when they were kidnapped by the SPLM. On 12 February, 12 northern merchants were killed and their goods destroyed. At the time, the Political Committee considered ways to contain the situation and reasserted the importance of commitment to the Kadugli agreements. However, members of the Committee were pelted after the meeting.

The Joint Defence Board also held a meeting about the situation, but was unable to contain it in the face of continued provocations and attacks. SPLM forces set a trap for the joint integrated units in which 14 soldiers were killed and 11 wounded. The aggression did not stop there. SPLM forces continued in cold blood to attack joint integrated units that included members of our armed forces. No violations could be more glaring. United Nations units were also targeted in the attacks of 19 May, which killed 22 soldiers and wounded many others.

The time came to put a stop to the killing. As I mentioned, we have always exercised restraint and acted wisely. I chose to come personally to present all this information to the Council, the Secretary-General and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, and I have done so over the past days and weeks. Regrettably, the violations have continued and strong messages were not sent to put an end to the attacks. Patience has its limits. Our armed forces could not continue to be openly fired on without defending themselves. Moreover, given all the violations, it was necessary to restore security and the rule of law in the Abyei area. That is what our armed forces have been doing there. I would like to stress that our presence in the Abyei area, as noted by the Under-Secretary-General, is not permanent and will continue only until a political and security agreement is signed that guarantees an end to such provocations and attacks by the SPLM.

I trust in the wisdom of the Council, because I know for a fact that it always addresses the root causes of any crisis and not just the symptoms. The armed forces currently present in the Abyei area are 14 miles to the north of the 1156 line. That is a reflection of our full commitment to the provisions of the CPA.

Meanwhile, the forces of the SPLM are deployed to the south of Bahr el-Arab, in flagrant violation of the provisions of the CPA. Therefore, keeping the status quo — that is, the Sudanese Armed Forces to the north of Bahr el-Arab and the southern forces to the south of Bahr el-Arab — would facilitate reaching a

new security and political agreement that would lead to the redeployment of joint integrated units in the area. Otherwise, a more effective mechanism could be found to replace both the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), taking into account the proposal made by President Mbeki, head of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel, to deploy a joint African police force in the area that would enable both parties to withdraw their forces. His proposal also included the establishment of an international mechanism in the area to monitor the boundaries between the two parties. The proposal is currently under consideration and proved its viability before the signing of the CPA, when it was made by Mr. Danforth. There are many precedents and lessons learned that we can take into account in that regard.

In conclusion, we would like to reiterate the fact that the presence of our armed forces in the Abyei area has been made necessary by the successive violations by the other party. Moreover, as we have mentioned, it is not a permanent presence. It will continue only until mutual agreement is reached about a mechanism for stability and security in the area. I would like to confirm that our presence cannot by any stretch be called an occupation. We are a sovereign country, and movement of our troops from one area to another within our country is simply movement; it is not an occupation in any way.

At the same time, we would like to assure the Council of our continued efforts to reach a peaceful settlement of the pending issues, including the boundaries and the mechanism for monitoring them, assets and debts, citizenship, international agreements, and so forth. No matter how many violations may be committed by the other side, we will not deviate from our main goal: to reach agreed settlements on those issues in a way that allows for the establishment of a secure and stable State in Southern Sudan enjoying ties of cooperation with the North.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Gatkuoth.

Mr. Gatkuoth: I am grateful for the opportunity to address the Security Council and to present the views of the Government of Southern Sudan. I wish to convey to the Council the greetings of the Minister for Regional Cooperation, His Excellency Deng Alor Kuol, and to pass on his regret at being unable to make the journey to New York to attend this meeting, given recent events on the ground.

On behalf of the Government and people of Southern Sudan, I wish to express to the Council my appreciation for its focus on and attention to events in the Sudan, and for its efforts to support full and final implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA). In that connection, we greatly appreciate the Council's visit to the Sudan and Southern Sudan in the past week. We would also like to express our sincere appreciation for the work of His Excellency the Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, and his Special Representative, Mr. Haile Menkerios, in support of the CPA process. And we are grateful for the continued support of the African Union High-level Implementation Panel under the able leadership of President Thabo Mbeki.

The Government of Southern Sudan welcomes the Security Council's recent extension of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in the Sudan (UNMIS). My Government confirms its request for a continued United Nations presence in Southern Sudan following our declaration of independence on 9 July 2011. In that regard, we welcome the recent special report of the Secretary-General on Sudan (S/2011/314*), as well as the work that has so far been done by the United Nations to plan for the establishment of a new mission to succeed UNMIS in Southern Sudan.

It is impossible to consider the question of the structure of the United Nations presence in Southern Sudan after independence without looking at the context in which the new State will be born, including regional dynamics. The internal issues in Southern Sudan referred to by the Secretary-General cannot be analysed or addressed separately from the state of North-South relations. As the Secretary-General noted, that relationship remains the overarching factor impacting peace and stability on both sides of the border.

My Government concurs with the Secretary-General that many of the security issues that affect South Sudan are directly related to the bilateral security issues between North and South. Our goal is to see peaceful coexistence between the two neighbouring States of South Sudan and the Sudan. Recent events have demonstrated how great a challenge this will be, and that continued third-party support will be critical if it is to be achieved.

With that in mind, the overriding priority for the Government of Southern Sudan is to ensure ongoing support by the United Nations for North-South security arrangements, especially at the border. We welcome the progress made by the parties in Addis Ababa yesterday, establishing an agreed security framework governing the North-South relationship after 9 July.

Yet as the Secretary-General himself noted in his report, implementation of the security agreements during the interim period has proved challenging, and any future agreements will thus require external support. We believe that the United Nations is best placed to provide such support and that the United Nations must have freedom of movement and the ability to monitor both sides of the border. This is a requirement of the CPA and is also in the interests of both parties.

In that context, we note and welcome the offer made to the parties by the Government of Ethiopia. The Government of Southern Sudan has accepted the offer, and we encourage the Government of the Sudan to do the same.

We suggest that the main objective of the United Nations should be to avoid a security vacuum after 9 July. Should UNMIS have to be drawn down on that date without an agreed mechanism mandated to monitor and observe the situation at the border, the international community would be left unable to respond effectively to threats to international peace and security in those border areas. The United Nations may need to plan for the possibility that peacekeepers might have to be deployed only on the southern side of the future border.

The Secretary-General's current proposal for a mandate for a military force in South Sudan after 9 July would only address issues within the borders of the new State, with a focus on helping the Government to extend the rule of law and protect civilians. Monitoring the border would require more troops than the 7,000 recommended by the Secretary-General and would have a different focus from that suggested in the report. The United Nations must do what is necessary to promote the security of both States, and the United Nations mission, or another agreed mechanism, will require appropriate military resources.

The role of the United Nations in border security is paramount, given the situation in Abyei, about which the Government of Southern Sudan is extremely concerned. The recent occupation of Abyei by the Sudanese Armed Forces is a serious violation of the CPA. Khartoum's actions over the past week represent a grave escalation that risks provoking a resumption of armed conflict between the two parties. The Security Council must intervene swiftly and decisively. We call on the Security Council once again to condemn unreservedly this move by Khartoum to take Abyei by force, and to demand that the Sudanese Armed Forces withdraw from Abyei immediately and unconditionally. UNMIS and the humanitarian agencies must be allowed full access to the area, consistent with Khartoum's international obligations.

The Government of Southern Sudan regrets the shooting incident that led to an exchange of fire between the two sides on 19 May, threatening a United Nations convoy in the Abyei area, and deplores the loss of life that resulted. We support the call by UNMIS for a joint investigation into those events, and we will cooperate fully in the process. Those responsible must be brought to justice, including by criminal prosecution. But that unfortunate event is not connected with, nor does it in any way justify, the excessive use of force by Khartoum in seeking to occupy Abyei and to prejudice full and final implementation of the CPA. Khartoum's irresponsible actions have put all progress under the CPA in serious jeopardy, and they threaten to unravel six years of hard work at the most decisive moment.

This invasion has also had serious humanitarian consequences. The full impact of the violence in Abyei — including civilian casualties and the number and whereabouts of persons displaced — is not yet known. We regret that the United Nations peacekeeping forces, which have a robust mandate to protect civilians in imminent danger, reportedly remained inside their compound during the military attacks by the Sudanese Armed Forces. The Sudanese Armed Forces and their proxies have now torched Abyei town and have facilitated the influx of nomadic Arab Misseriya people into the area.

Thousands of civilians have fled the area. This attempt to alter Abyei's demography by force should be condemned by the Council in the strongest terms. By burning Abyei and forcing the civilian population out, the National Congress Party (NCP) has in effect sought to repudiate its obligations under the Abyei Protocol of the CPA and has made it very difficult to hold the required referendum in the short term. We call on the

NCP to reopen the border so that the people who have been displaced from their homes can return, and to allow humanitarian organizations to deliver the assistance required.

We also reject and condemn in the strongest terms the issuing of decrees by President Al-Bashir attempting to dissolve the Abyei Administrative Council and dismiss the Council's staff. The Abyei administration must be reinstated immediately and the special administrative arrangements for Abyei must remain in place until a mutually acceptable solution is found.

Until such a solution is found, Abyei belongs neither wholly to the North nor to the South. We therefore reject the National Congress Party (NCP) claims that Abyei is part of the North. The parties' obligations with respect to Abyei were very clearly spelled out in the CPA, including in the Abyei Protocol. This required the holding of a referendum to determine whether Abyei should remain in the North or return to the South, from where it was transferred for administrative reasons in 1905. We believe in the internationally accepted principle that the transfer of administration does not entail the transfer of territory.

The implementation of the terms of the Abyei Protocol and the holding of the referendum were delayed by Khartoum, which has been allowed over time to shirk its legal obligations with respect to Abyei. In an attempt to find a peaceful solution, the Government of Southern Sudan accepted referral to binding arbitration. The 2009 award of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), setting out the boundaries of Abyei, is binding upon the parties and must be implemented.

The Government of Southern Sudan remains committed to the negotiation process led by the African Union High-level Implementation Panel and to reaching a political agreement that is consistent with the terms of the PCA award, as the Security Council itself has recently called for. This means that the integrity of Abyei's borders as defined by the PCA must be respected as the foundation of any solution. The negotiation process must be supported and accelerated. The Council must understand and acknowledge, however, that Khartoum has a history of making agreements over Abyei and then later failing to honour them. We appeal to Council members to use their good offices to urge the NCP to reach a definitive and binding agreement, and to work with the Government of Southern Sudan to finalize the implementation of the CPA.

We also reject unequivocally any suggestion by Khartoum that the CPA has been fully implemented. The CPA is a legal agreement binding on the parties, and crucial obligations remain to be fulfilled, for example relating to Abyei, Southern Kordofan and Blue Nile. The North cannot unilaterally withdraw from these outstanding obligations. Further, the parties agreed in the CPA to a United Nations mission to monitor the Agreement's implementation, and the North cannot withdraw its consent for this United Nations mission before the CPA obligations are fulfilled and no longer relevant.

We note that, in accordance with the provisions of the CPA, an independent State in Southern Sudan will become a reality on 9 July. The Government of Southern Sudan welcomes the Secretary-General's proposals for United Nations support to the new State to meet political, security and protection challenges in a way that will build its authority and create an enabling environment for State-building and socio-economic development. We believe that the United Nations should move forward with the establishment of a peace consolidation mission in South Sudan as of 9 July. If there is no agreement between the CPA parties on a continued international presence in the border areas, the mandate of that mission may need to include a border-monitoring component in the South.

We welcome the Secretary-General's intention to establish an advance team composed of a senior management group with the required specialized expertise to set up the core capabilities of the new mission, and encourage the advance team to start its work immediately. The Government of Southern Sudan looks forward to consultations with the United Nations on the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and of other senior United Nations officials to the new mission.

We note that the protection of civilians is first and foremost the sovereign responsibility of the Government, as the Secretary-General notes in his report. The Government of Southern Sudan accepts fully its responsibility for the protection of civilians in South Sudan. We also agree with the recommendation that external support to the Government to build its capacity to protect civilians should be primarily a

civilian activity. The Government of Southern Sudan welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendation of a mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter to provide, within capabilities, physical protection to civilians under imminent threat of physical danger, including through the use of force as a last resort.

The Government of Southern Sudan welcomes the Secretary-General's recommendation that the Government and local stakeholders be assisted in preventing conflict, consolidating the peace, strengthening the multi-party system and addressing issues related to peace, governance and reconciliation. In this context, we would like to reaffirm the importance of national ownership and to express our desire to work in partnership with the United Nations system. We note that a drawdown of the mission would be based on benchmarks agreed together by the Government of Southern Sudan and the Security Council, and would welcome early consideration of such benchmarks.

Lastly, we welcome the suggestion that the mission play a coordination role in bringing together international actors to speak with one voice in helping the new Government to address the challenges of peace consolidation.

Obviously many details regarding the structure of the United Nations presence remain to be worked out. We would welcome frequent and detailed dialogue with the Council and the Secretariat over the coming weeks.

I would like to close by repeating the words spoken by His Excellency President Salva Kiir in Juba last week. We remain committed to peace, but this should not be interpreted as cowardice. We will not go back to war because we have fought enough. We refuse to be provoked. Southern Sudan will become independent on 9 July, and we look forward to the Council quickly recognizing this in the days thereafter. But we must also ensure that the new State is stable, secure and at peace with its neighbours. This is our common challenge and our common responsibility.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Gatkuoth for his statement.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of the subject.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.